

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM USLO PEKING

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 443

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, UR, CH

SUBJECT: SOVIET DIPLOMATS AND WANG HAI-JUNG ON THE CURRENT STRUGGLE

REF: HONG KONG 2739

1. AT LUNCH WITH USLO OFFICERS AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY MARCH 10, CHARGE BREZHNEV AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR FEDOTOV LIMITED THEIR COMMENTS IN THAT MORNING'S PEOPLE' DAILY EDITORIAL TO A FEW "INITIAL" AND "PERSONAL" OBSERVATIONS. THESE WERE NOTEWORTHY CHIEFLY IN THAT BREZHNEV PUT CONSIDERABLY MORE EMPHASIS ON THE EDITORIAL'S FUNCTION OF ACTIVATING THE CAMPAIGN NATIONWIDE THAN ON ITS FUNCTION OF

SEEKING GUIDELINES TO CONTROL THE CONDUCT OF THE CAMPAIGN. THE GUIDELINES, HE SUGGESTED, WERE IN GOOD PART FOR THE RECORD, AND AMOUNTED TO "THIS IS HOW WE SAY THE CAMPAIGN SHOULD BE HANDLED; IF THESE GUIDELINES ARE VIOLATED, IT WILL NOT BE OUR FAULT." BREZHNEV ALSO COMMENTED THAT MAO, IN SAYING THE PEOPLE WERE DISPLEASED ("REVERSING CORRECT VERDICTS GOES AGAINST THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE"), WAS IN FACT EXPRESSING HIS OWN DISPLEASURE IN THE HIGHEST

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DEGREE, AND THIS POINT WOULD NOT BE LOST ON THE COUNTRY.

IN SUM, BREZHNEV APPEARED
TO TAKE PRETTY MUCH AT FACE VALUE THE LANGUAGE IN THE
EDITORIAL ABOUT THE PRESENT STRUGGLE'S BEING A
"DEEPENING" OF EARLIER ONES, AND ABOUT ITS BEING CARRIED
THROUGH "TO THE END."

2. THE SOVIET MILITARY ATTACHE, COLONEL V.S. LOBANOV, TOOK
A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT APPROACH DURING A CALL ON USLO POLCOUNS
MARCH 12. HE SEEMED TO SEE THE EDITORIAL CHIEFLY AS PART OF
AN EFFORT TO ISOLATE TENG AND CUT THE LINES LINKING HIM TO THOSE
OFFICIALS (NOT ALL OF THEM NECESSARILY REHABILITEES) WHO WOULD LOOK
TO
HIM, RATHER THAN CHIANG CHING AND HER CROWD, FOR LEADERSHIP AS
LONG AS HE HELD POWER. ONCE THAT PURPOSE WAS ACCOMPLISHED (AND
LOBANOV DID NOT SEEM TO DOUBT THAT IT WOULD BE), THOSE NOW
BEHIND THE ANTI-RIGHTIST CAMPAIGN" WOULD SOON LOSE ANY REAL
INTEREST IN IT. HE ASKED IF WE THOUGHT TENG WOULD BE KILLED. WHEN
WE SAID WE DIDN'T THINK SO, HE REMARKED THAT IN THAT CASE IT
MIGHT NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR TENG TO RETAIN POWER QUICKLY AFTER THE
DEATH OF MAO, AT WHICH TIME TENG COULD CLAIM TO HAVE BEEN THE
TRUE UPHOLDER OF MAO'S LINE. LOBANOV SEEMED TO AGREE WITH
OUR COMMENT THAT MAO'S OWN UNFAVORABLE CHARACTERIZATION OF
TENG IN THE EDITORIAL MIGHT HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO BLOCK SUCH A
POSSIBILITY, BUT THIS DID NOT SEEM TO LESSEN HIS BELIEF THAT IF
TENG SURVIVED MAO IT WOULD BE VERY BAD NEWS FOR THE "RADICALS."

3. WITHOUT INDICATING HOW HE KNEW, LOBANOV SAID THE LIBERATION
ARMY DAILY HAD BEEN REPRINTING THE PEOPLE'S DAILY MATERIAL ON
THE ANTI-RIGHTIST STRUGGLE BUT UNTIL A WEEK AGO HAD NOT
GENERATED ANY OF ITS OWN. FOR THE PAST WEEK, HOWEVER, THE
PLA PAPER HAD ALSO
BEEN CARRYING ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
COMPANY-LEVEL PROPAGANDA UNITS, WHICH LOBANOV INTERPRETED AS
A MINIMAL RESPONSE TO PRESSURES FOR GREATER PLA INVOLVEMENT.
(OTHER LOBANOV REMARKS BY SEPTTEL.)

4. BREZHNEV'S "LE PEUPLE, C'EST MOI" INTERPRETATION OF THE
HEADLINED MAO QUOTE SEEMED TO BE INADVERTENTLY CORROBATED BY
VICE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG HAI-JUNG AT LUNCHEON TWO WEEKS AGO
WITH THE
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NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR. WANG (SAID TO BE MAO'S GRANDNIECE)
DISPLAYED UNCHARACTERISTIC PASSION IN TALKING ABOUT THE PRESENT
STRUGGLE, AND WOUND UP BY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE: "WE WILL WIN.
WE...UH...THE PEEOPLE WILL CERTAINLY WIN*"
THAYER

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